

Remarks to the National Family Partnership in Elkridge, Maryland
September 13, 1995

The President. Thank you very much. Terrell did a great job, didn't he? Let's give him another hand. Didn't he do a great job? [Applause]

When Terrell was going up to speak, the Governor said, "He seems so calm." And I said, "Well, after all, it's his crowd." [Laughter]

I am honored to be here with your Governor; with the Attorney General, Janet Reno; and with our Nation's Drug Czar, Dr. Lee Brown; with the National Family Partnership chair, Carol Reeves; with the members of the family who did a lot to inspire what we're doing here today, Myrna Camarena, who is Enrique Camarena's sister and a DEA agent; Dora Camarena, Enrique's mother; and Rick Evans, the executive director of the National Family Partnership; and of course, along with the Governor and all the other State officials who are here; Congressman Cardin. And to your principal, your superintendent, the school board members, and all the others who are here, I'm delighted to be in this wonderful school. And I thank all of you who work here and who send your children here for making this such a successful place. I'd also like to thank all the law enforcement officers who've come here from all around the country.

Let me tell you while we're here, we're here to do two things: First of all, as the Attorney General has said, to observe the first anniversary of the enactment of the crime bill into law and to celebrate its accomplishments; and secondly, to reaffirm the elemental proposition that if we don't do something to keep our young people drug-free, we will never solve the crime problem, and that that begins first and foremost with an act of personal responsibility on the part of every American—personal responsibility on the part of the students, on the part of parents and educators and others, for self, for family, for community, and for country.

Lee Brown has done an outstanding job in working with our high schools to reduce drugs and violence. Yesterday, he kicked off our national, back-to-school "Stay drug-free"

public service announcement campaign, enlisting the involvement of prominent sports figures and other entertainers to tape radio and TV spots urging young people to stay drug-free and urging parents to stay involved. He's also passing out this wonderful little bumper sticker that I think could go very well with your Red Ribbon Campaign. It says, "Stay drug-free, you have the power"—you have the power.

A year ago, when the crime bill was enacted, those of us who supported it, I believe, exercised our personal responsibility to the young people of America to do everything we could to ensure their safety and to provide alternatives to crime and violence. It was one of the proudest accomplishments of my tenure as your President.

We broke 6 long years of partisan, rhetorical, political gridlock to put in place a crime bill that was both tough and smart, that actually holds out the promise of saving lives and increasing the quality of life and the safety of the American people. We put 100,000 more police on the street; made "three-strikes-and-your-out" the law of the land; banned assault weapons from our neighborhoods, our streets, and our schools; finally elected to do something about the terrible problem of violence against women, much of it, unfortunately, domestic violence. And we gave our young people some things to say yes to as well as to say no to, because these police officers said we had to have more prevention in education programs in our schools if we wanted a safe America for the next generation.

Today, there are those who in the name of a balanced budget would go back on all this progress. They are the same people who said we would never put 100,000 police officers on the street. They said we couldn't even put 20,000 on in 6 years, over 25,000 in one year. We're going to. We're on time. We're ahead of schedule. We're below cost. We are keeping our commitments to the American people. So those who want to turn away from measures that have lowered the crime rate in almost every major urban and rural area in this country, I say, not if I can stop it—not if I can stop it.

Let me be clear—the Governor mentioned it—this is not about balancing the

budget. I am for balancing the budget. When I became the President, we had quadrupled the debt in 12 years and a bipartisan agreement to make out like it didn't matter. We had a \$290 billion a year deficit. That deficit today is \$160 billion. We've cut it nearly in half in only 3 years. I am for balancing the budget.

But the purpose of balancing the budget is to lift the burden of debt from these young people in this audience, to free up money in America to be borrowed by private business people to invest, to create jobs, to strengthen our economy, to improve the quality of life in the future. We cannot do that if we decide to balance the budget in ways that will undermine our economy or our quality of life. And that is why I have said repeatedly, we do not have to cut education, and we must not cut our efforts to reduce the crime rate, to reduce violence, and to give our children a safer, more secure future. It is not necessary to balance the budget, and it undermines the very purpose of doing it. We must not take that course.

I just want to say one other thing. What we have done on the crime bill has worked because of the exercise of personal responsibility by other people in the criminal justice system. In Washington, we can give these fine police chiefs here and the people with whom they work the tools, but they have to use the tools, and citizens have to help them. Therefore, everyone in America who is a good citizen can justifiably claim some responsibility for the fact that the crime rate for all serious offenses, including murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault, is down in almost every area in the United States. That is an American achievement, and we need to keep working until we bring it down to an acceptable level, where it ought to be.

But just as we have made progress in certain areas, there are clouds still hanging over our future. And I want to talk about two of them today because they affect these young people in this audience.

Last week, the Justice Department issued a report which showed that while overall crime is down, violent crime committed by juveniles, people under the age of 18, is still at an all-time high. Juvenile violence has now

become the number one crime problem in the United States of America. We cannot rest—we cannot rest in our official positions, we cannot rest as citizens, we cannot rest as parents until we do something to change that.

I am so sick and tired of picking up the newspaper and reading stories about honor students standing at bus stops being shot down by careless drive-by shooters. I am so tired of reading stories about a 16-year-old boy shooting a 12-year-old boy and killing him because he thought he was treated with disrespect. Whatever happened to sticks and stones can break my bones? What ever happened to count to 10 before you talk, much less act?

I couldn't believe it, the other day there was a survey of teenage gang members in which two-thirds of them said they felt justified in shooting someone who treated them with disrespect. If the President took that position, we'd be out of bullets in the country. [Laughter] Who ever heard of this kind of behavior.

It's funny, but it's not. It's not funny. We have to take responsibility for the way the young people of this country look at the world, how they define right and wrong, how they define their dignity. The greatest human beings who have ever lived in the whole history of humanity were consistently abused by others, and they were great because they did not lash out. What is this madness that our children are being taught—that it is all right to take violent action against other people if they say something you don't like? We must do something about it.

The second thing that bothers me, besides juvenile violence, was revealed in a report yesterday released by our Government through the Department of Health and Human Services, which showed that while drug use is down among people between the ages of 18 and 34 and cocaine use is down, marijuana use is going up again among young people between the ages of 12 and 17, nearly doubling in just 3½ years from 4 percent to 7 percent who say they've used marijuana in the last month.

That's because apparently more and more young people don't think it's bad for you. Well, it's wrong, it's illegal, it's dangerous. It's a horrible first step, and we have got to

turn that number around. And that's one big reason I am here today with young people who know it and who are prepared to say it.

I have believed in and participated in the National Family Partnership's Red Ribbon Campaign for a long time. When I was the Governor of my State, Hillary and I were always actively involved every year about this time. We were always proud to do it. And I believe every year I was Governor, we ranked in the top three States in America in the number of our young people participating. And since we only had 2.4 million people, I was pretty proud of that.

What you are doing is important because the Red Ribbon chairs, the Red Ribbon parents, and most important, the Red Ribbon students are doing what no law, no government can do. They are assuming responsibility for their behavior, the behavior of their children, and in so doing, for their own futures. The Red Ribbon is the symbol now in America of our children's pledge to lead drug-free lives. The young people here are doing the right thing. Saying no to drugs is saying yes to life.

In addition to the pledge by the students and the display of red ribbon, the Red Ribbon Campaign also focuses on educating our young people about the dangers of drug use and mobilizing every community to develop its own solution. And I want to emphasize that. Every community in America needs its own plan, based on its own resources and its own problems, to deal with this issue. There is no cookie-cutter plan coming out of Washington that will solve all these problems. Every community needs people like you to chart the future and to hold up these young people as models.

That's why I want to thank those of you in the National Family Partnership for choosing this day to kick off your Red Ribbon Campaign. It's a wonderful day. We're celebrating the first anniversary of the crime bill, its results, and a declining crime rate, the exercise of responsibility by adults in positions of authority. But more importantly, we're celebrating the future by the exercise of responsibility by these young people.

We have to do something to make their future less violent. As the Attorney General

said, the Justice Department in its youth violence initiative is going to help 10 communities establish partnerships between police departments and courts and schools, hospitals and civic leaders to reduce violence.

In Maryland, in Baltimore, 24 community police officers will form curfew enforcements and juvenile violence crime teams to work with the schools to lower violence against young people, not to punish children but to demand responsibility from them and their parents.

In Inglewood, California, the police department has made street terrorism a crime and intensified their community efforts to increase penalties for gang members who practice it. We cannot tolerate terrorism of any kind in our country. Why should we go to all the trouble to keep these terrorists from coming into the country if we're going to let home-grown kinds terrorize our children on their own streets?

In Birmingham, police officers are working with schools to make sure that they get rid of guns in schools. No one should ever fear being shot in or around their schools. Similar efforts will be supported in Bridgeport, Connecticut; Cleveland; Milwaukee; Richmond; San Antonio; Seattle; and Salinas, California. But nothing we will do will work unless all of us who are adults take the time to teach our children what it means to be a good person and a good citizen.

Our Secretary of Education has called this character education, trying to encourage our schools to teach basic values that make for a good life, like honesty and trustworthiness and respect for self, others, property, and our environment. These values make a difference. And that is what this Red Ribbon Campaign is all about.

I'd like now to ask the young people who are up here on the stage with me and all the young people in the audience who want to do it, to stand up and repeat the Red Ribbon Pledge for the United States of America, so everybody in the country can hear it today. Stand up and I will say it, and you repeat after me:

I pledge to lead a healthy, drug-free lifestyle.

Audience members. I pledge to lead a healthy, drug-free lifestyle.

The President. I will say no to alcohol.

Audience members. I will say no to alcohol.

The President. I will say no to other drugs.

Audience members. I will say no to other drugs.

The President. I will help my friends say no.

Audience members. I will help my friends say no.

The President. I pledge to stand up for what I know is right.

Audience members. I pledge to stand up for what I know is right.

The President. And remain drug-free and proud.

Audience members. And remain drug-free and proud.

The President. Thank you very much.

Now, I want to invite the students, starting here, as I finish, to come up here and sign this pledge with me. But as I do, I want every adult in this audience to think about this. We're proud of these children who made this pledge. Most of us who know something about this problem are sitting here thinking, gosh, I wish every child in America would make this pledge.

We expect these children to keep their word. Well, if we do, why don't we set an example by keeping our word to them, to make this the safest possible country with the healthiest possible future for them by doing what we know works to reduce crime and to give them a chance to keep the pledge they just made.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:35 a.m. at the Mayfield Woods Middle School. In his remarks, he referred to student Terrell Brice; Gov. Parris Glendening of Maryland; and Myrna and Dora Camarena, sister and mother of Drug Enforcement Administration Special Agent Enrique Camarena Salazar, who was killed while conducting an undercover investigation of drug traffickers in Mexico.

Statement on the Normalization Agreement Between Greece and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

September 13, 1995

I welcome the agreement signed by the Foreign Ministers of Greece and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in New York today normalizing their relations. The agreement is very much in the interest of both nations and will significantly strengthen regional stability while aiding our efforts to negotiate a wider peace in the Balkans.

Both Prime Minister Papandreu and President Gligorov deserve congratulations for demonstrating the courage and determination needed to reach an agreement that was fair to both sides. I hope both governments will now proceed to establish friendly and enduring bilateral relations while taking steps to resolve their remaining differences, including over the name issue.

I also wish to thank U.N. Special Representative Cyrus Vance and U.S. Special Envoy Matthew Nimetz for their tireless efforts in helping to mediate the dispute.

In view of the significant progress represented by this agreement, I wrote to President Gligorov earlier in the week inviting his government to establish diplomatic relations with the United States. I am pleased to announce that I have received his positive response and can confirm that diplomatic relations now exist between our two countries.

I look forward to meeting with the negotiators and representatives of the two countries tomorrow to congratulate them personally on this important achievement.

Proclamation 6822—National Farm Safety and Health Week, 1995

September 13, 1995

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

America's agricultural productivity is a gift to our Nation and to people everywhere.